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1 April 1964

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Partition of Satellite Development and Operations

1. You have asked for a working proposal to assign responsibilities for the satellite reconnaissance development, procurement and operations which will: (a) insure that the resources of both CIA and the Air Force are exploited fully; and (b) provide a single operational authority to be held responsible for the successful launching and recovery of satellite vehicles. The partitions discussed below probably cover the available choices.

2. A single satellite launching, tracking and recovery Authority should be established to co-ordinate the efforts of contractors, Air Force and CIA people involved in both operational and research/test flights. The ingredients of this group are the facilities and Air Force manpower at Vandenberg and in the recovery forces; the Lockheed, Douglas and Convair vehicle teams; and payload contractors working either under CIA or Air Force supervision (in the special enclave under General Greer). This Satellite Operational Authority might be placed under the Space Systems Division of General Schriever's command, as it is too large a complex to operate in any way other than a normal line mode.

3. We must make a clear distinction between research/development satellite flights and operational launches of proven payloads. Although the same facilities and vehicles are used in operational and R&D launches, the real difference is one of who is ultimately responsible for a given launch. In the case of R&D flights, it is the payload development team who must be up front

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USAF review(s) completed.

NRO review(s)
completed.

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as the test director. He is then held responsible for the success or failure of a research flight, while using all the facilities of the launching Authority. In the case of the operational launches of proven payloads, the launching Authority itself should be completely responsible for the operation. Of course, this Authority must rely on individual payload development teams, in the same way as they rely on the booster teams and recovery forces, to insure that their part of the flight is successful.

25X1 4. Even after normal R&D is complete, the payloads and [REDACTED] are continually changing. This continual change was responsible for the progressive upgrading and perfection of the CORONA system and must not be discouraged. In any case, it is unrealistic to think that we will ever build enough or fly enough of exactly the same type of payload that we can write a service manual and turn over the in-flight payload monitoring to someone in the launching authority. There is thus a clear need for the payload development team to continue to play its proper role in launch operations, albeit under the over-all command of the operational launch controller, in all flights of their payloads, so that an intimate knowledge of each payload can contribute to the success of each mission.

5. The Space Systems Division should procure all booster and upper stage vehicles. They should also be responsible for their delivery to the satellite launching authority at Vandenberg. This is the way the system now works, and there is no reason to change it.

25X1 6. The only real question left then is the partition of payload responsibilities. We must make explicit decisions as to who will develop, procure, program and monitor (in flight) the individual payloads. General Greer now does this job for [REDACTED] CIA has done this job for CORONA and ARGON and is now beginning the development on its own funds of a successor system to CORONA.

25X1 [REDACTED] Let us agree to beg the question [REDACTED] 25X1
[REDACTED] for the time being and try to establish a legitimate

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partition scheme for the photographic problem.

7. Basically there are three choices for the partition of payload responsibility:

a. All payloads developed by CIA. The Air Force will naturally resist this since it would mean giving

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b. The Air Force responsible for all payloads. The problem here is that this would completely eliminate CIA from all satellite activities, and we understand that this would be unacceptable from your point of view.

c. Divide the responsibilities for payloads according to mission. This would have the advantage of focusing the Air Force and CIA groups on technologies, rather than procurements and allow a continuity of research and development.

8. This only common ground between [redacted] be part of this program and the Air Force reluctance to do any programs to CIA seems to be the fault line provided by different types of payloads. In the photographic line we now have two well-defined types of systems; the high resolution spotting system and the broad coverage search system. The Air Force has a recently demonstrated capability in the high resolution problem at General Greer's organization, who are well qualified to carry on that line of development. CIA has a tradition and expanding understanding of broad coverage search systems, and is well qualified to do the second. Specifically, I think that CIA should be assigned the payload responsibility for CORONA, ARGON and development of the second-generation search system. [redacted]

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9. However, no partition of responsibilities can be expected to work effectively under the present environment in which McCallan has absolute budgetary control and holds the conviction that we should not be in the business. I believe that we must assign clear technical and fiscal responsibility to CIA, the Air Force, NSA, or whoever else is delegated the responsibility to develop a given class of payloads.

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10. CIA must have an adequate annual source of funds available directly to it to carry out the development of satellite payloads assigned to it for development. There are two ways to insure this. The first is to include those funds within the CIA budget. A second possibility is to grant the DD/S&T an equal voice with the Under Secretary of the Air Force in framing the NSD budget, and then explicitly transferring those funds in a lump sum to CIA at the first of each year.

11. CIA must also have an equal voice in booster allocation for R&D launches, so that both the Air Force and CIA will be adequately supported by satellite launch vehicles for their programs.

12. The scheduling and managing of operational launches should be set only by the USIB, and the committee John Bross has proposed is a good way to improve this control. This means that USIB should specifically regulate the type, number and frequency of successful satellite coverages they desire and leave it to the launching authority to plan back-ups needed to insure the requested results.

ALBERT D. WHEELON
Deputy Director
(Science and Technology)

cc: [redacted]
General James Doolittle
[redacted]
Mr. John Bross

ODD/S&T: [redacted]

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